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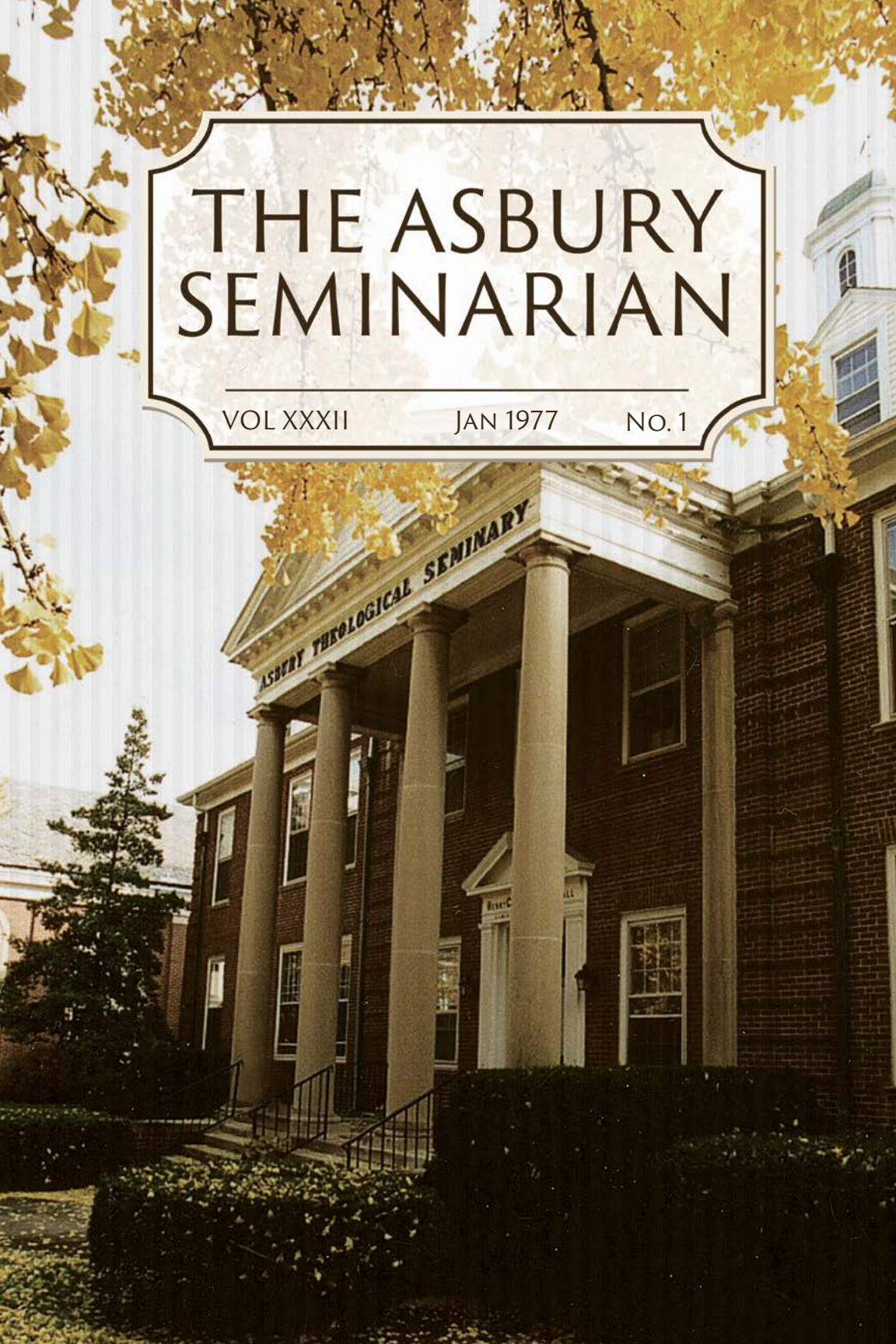

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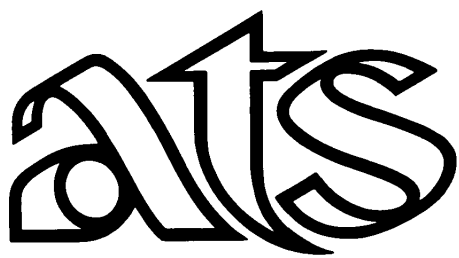
The Wesleyan Message in the Life and Thought of Today



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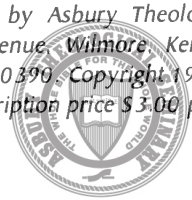

IN THIS ISSUE

The purpose of this publication is to serve as an organ of Asbury Theological Seminary for the dissemination of material of interest and value primarily to its immediate constituency of alumni, students and friends, but also to a broader readership of churchmen, theologians, students and other interested persons.

Material published in this journal appears here because of its intrinsic value in the on-going discussion of theological issues. While this publication does not pretend to compete with those theological journals specializing in articles of technical scholarship, it affirms a commitment to rigorous standards of academic integrity and prophetic forthrightness.

Introduction to This Issue

by George A. Turner

The Editorial Board of *The Asbury Seminarian* has asked the Department of Biblical Studies to furnish material for this issue. The article "A Case for Biblical Authority" on the authority of the Old Testament is by John Oswalt, one of our younger professors, who deals perceptively and in depth with one of the ongoing issues which is constantly alive to readers of the Bible.

Dr. G. H. Livingston of our faculty contributes the important article on structural analysis in the Old Testament. This paper was read at the Evangelical Theological Society Meeting in Jackson, Mississippi in December of 1975 and is now made available for this issue. It shows the mark of mature scholarship and at the same time reveals a scholar who is abreast of contemporary issues in methodology.

Most of us like to hear sermons that are really expositions of Biblical truth rather than messages which merely claim Biblical relevance and origin. Ronald Ball was the senior chosen to preach in the spring of the last academic year as a representative of his class. He has made his sermon available to us. He plans to go into full-time evangelism, and this sermon, based as it is upon the Bible and delivered with evangelistic zeal, is considered by our committee a commendable example of Biblical and evangelistic preaching.

A Case for Biblical Authority

by John N. Oswalt

In an age crying out for authority, many are looking to the Bible. But what is the nature of the Bible's authority? From whence is it derived? How is it expressed? What are its implications? The thesis of this article is that any view of the Bible's authority vested in it by the community is inadequate in the face of the Biblical phenomena. The authority of Scripture is inherent in its nature as revelation. What such a view does and does not demand will be examined in closing.

For virtually its entire history, until the last 100 years, the Church has accepted the Bible's apparent claim that it is the written Word of God. It was, and is, the revelation of God. So said the Church. Therefore, the Bible was also assumed to be the final source on all matters of science, history, geography, etc.

The rise of literary and historical criticism in the last century raised questions about all that. So much that the whole idea of the Bible having its source in God was rejected by many thinkers and theologians. It was a record, now entirely rewritten, of a people's groping for God.

However, for many in both Europe and America who accepted the findings of literary and historical criticism, such a conclusion did not do justice to the singularity of the Bible. They were impressed by its unusual concepts of history, God, humanity, etc. The consensus arose that while the Bible was not itself revelation, it was a witness to revelation. It reported and recorded, interpreted and re-interpreted certain genuinely revelatory acts of God in history. Thus, the idea of revelation in history became an important theological construct, especially in this country during the 1950's.

However, the British scholar James Barr, among others, pointed out that this construct with its great emphasis upon the revelatory acts of God does not do justice to the majority of Scripture where God is quoted or at least said to be the source of the ideas.[1] One must hasten

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to add that Barr does not argue that God did speak, but only that any attempt to convey the Biblical idea of itself which does not take account of the idea of the speaking God is to that degree inadequate. To accept certain Biblical categories while rejecting others, he suggests, is to arrive at a position which is neither Biblical nor scientific.

Many other voices echoed Barr's and raised other questions as well. The result was a consensus that Biblical authority cannot be thought to reside in a "revelation in history" concept. But no general agreement has been reached as to where the authority does reside. The most which many can say is summed up in the position of Barr: *the Bible holds authority over the community of faith because the community has delegated it such authority.*[2] He refers to the Bible as the "Classical model of faith." The Jewish and Christian communities have designated certain experiences and statements as the best examples of what their faith is all about. Since their faith is our faith, we are not free to vary from this model as we will. True, it is not prescriptive, nor does it say all there is to say, but, as we step into the future, we must always evaluate ourselves by that model, lest unknowingly, we lose our identity.

Similarly, John Bright uses the analogy of the United States Constitution, a document which has authority over us because of its summarization of the ideas upon which our nation was founded and because we agree to abide by it.[3] The Constitution defines what the United States is, not because of some inherent quality, but because of the facts of history. Nevertheless, while the 50 states could make a radical departure from the Constitution, in so doing they would become radically discontinuous with that entity which has been the United States of America.

The comments of both Bright and Barr are useful because they remind us that if the day should come when the Bible is not a key (if not *the* key) factor in the formation of the nature, doctrine and ministry of the Christian Church, on that day, whatever else it may be, it ceases to be the Christian Church.

Nevertheless, there are thoughtful people around the world who wonder if Bright and Barr and those like them are saying enough. Given the unique character and impact of the Bible across at least 3000 years, is it enough to say that the Bible has authority because the communities of faith have given it authority? Certainly the people of the United States have created their Constitution and made it what it is. Is the same true of the Bible? Is it the product of Israel and the Church? Or in some sense are *they* the products of the Bible and

that divine self-disclosure which it records? Obviously, it took a community of faith to interact with God and to record the ways in which He revealed Himself. But did not that revelation, now enclosed in Scripture, in some sense create that community and does it not do so still?

The issue comes down to this: does the Bible reveal the character and nature of a God seeking a community, or is it the record of a community seeking God? If it is the former, then it is revelatory and carries the very authority of the unchanging God for all people in all times. If it is the latter, then it is no more authoritative than any other body of religious literature. It is the province of religious historians and antiquarians, speaking only to those who already believe.

In this vein, it is interesting to note that Barr, in his recent book *The Bible in the Modern World,* only mentions the possibility of the Bible being revealed in passing, and then dismisses it.[4] Yet when inveighing so eloquently against the adequacy of historical experience as constituting revelation, he argued that only some concept of revelation which accounted for the Biblical idea of the speaking God was acceptable. One has the unpleasant feeling that he attacked the idea of revelation through history, not to put a more adequate conception in its place, but because the whole concept of a revealing God, in word or event, is meaningless to him. Yet without that concept the Bible has only a very relative claim upon society today, a fact which becomes painfully clear as Barr tries to explain how the religious apprehensions of people 2000 to 3000 years ago has any relevance to persons in the second half of the twentieth century.

But on what basis might one argue for an inherent rather than a derived authority for Scripture? One reason is the not inconsiderable Church tradition of 1900 years. We ought not dismiss lightly the best thinking of scholars and divines of the past 19 centuries and more. Another is the Bible's incomparable ability to survive, and bury, the predictions of its imminent demise. Another is its capacity to rejuvenate broken and battered lives. Another is its ability to capture the essence of human life so well that across 4000 years we see ourselves in its characters. Beside it how strange and odd seem the finest examples of ancient literature: *the Enuma Elish, the Gilgamesh epic, the Tale of Aqht, Homer, the Anaeid.* We can say of each of them, "This is great literature." Yet, somehow, none of them lay hold of us as does the Bible.

Emile Cailliet, the French theologian, tells of his first encounter with the Bible when he was a young agnostic in his twenties. He had long

looked for a book which would, in his words, "understand me," but had never given the Bible serious consideration. One day, at a difficult point in his life, he came into the possession of a Bible, never having owned one before. He read it through the night, exclaiming again and again, "Here is the book which understands me."[5] That kind of authority was not delegated by the Church.

But perhaps one may argue that all of the above, and the latter especially, are very subjective. Is there no more objective evidence to believe that the Bible has authority over us because it has come from God? There is. John Bright is hinting at this point when he speaks of the Bible's theology as being authoritative.[6] However, I would go beyond that and argue that the world view of the Bible is so radically different from that of its neighbors that it could not have been discovered, only revealed. This is essentially the position of G. Ernest Wright as expounded in his *Old Testament Against Its Environment* 25 years ago.[7] While there are many today who say that his position must now be modified,[8] those modifications do nothing to the central cogency of his case.

It is probably correct that we know today, more than in 1950, that Israel was an integral part of Ancient Near Eastern culture, sharing many of the basic approaches, customs and outlooks. Yet this knowledge does not decrease our consciousness of the radical difference between the world view of Israel and her neighbors. Indeed it heightens that consciousness, for she held these positions from within the culture, not in isolation from it.

What are the features of this distinctive world view? They are as follows, and as difficult as it may seem, they are unique to the Old Testament, appearing elsewhere, if then, only in its daughters Judaism, Christianity and Islam. God is one, transcendent, uncreated, transsexual, personal. He cannot be represented by any visual form, especially a natural one. He cannot be manipulated magically, but longs to bless people who will respond to Him in personal faith, trust and obedience. He is utterly consistent and trustworthy. The system as created is good, but because of an ethical choice by man, is fallen. Man, male and female, is the highest and best of creation. The human problem is not security, but alienation. There is a distinction between humanity and nature which, like that between Creator and creation, may not be blurred. Existence is not cyclical, finding its meaning in the recurrent. Rather, it is linear, moving from promise to fulfillment, finding its meaning in the unique, non-recurrent events.

Individual differences are significant and worthy of record. The body is good. Ethical behavior is rooted in the consciousness of God's behavior toward oneself. Thus, love, honor, justice and faithfulness are not desiderata, they are obligations because they describe the character of God. One could go on, but these are enough to demonstrate that, although the Bible does partake of the culture of its day, it infuses that culture with a radically different world view.

Where did these radical ideas come from? They were not borrowed. Other ancient cultures from around the world share with one another a basic set of concepts, a set very different from those just described. Why do all of them have those ideas in common? Because they all share the same perspective. They are all reaching out toward the divine in an attempt to discover the meaning of life, and they are all expressing the nature of the divine and of life in terms of the given – this natural system.

This approach issued in four problems. First, deity was conceived of as non-transcendent, multiple, arbitrary and fundamentally sexual. They were chiefly to be understood as personifications of nature. Second, the appropriate means of relating to the deity was through sympathetic magic. This magic is rooted in the conviction of non-transcendence. Since God is not distinct from this world, but rather, is continuous with it, He is best manipulated through the performance of certain imitative acts which of necessity will produce similar acts on the part of the appropriate deity. Thus, in the area of fertility, productivity and power, a human sexual rite can be made continuous with divine activity which is in turn continuous with certain responses in nature.

This issues in the third problem. Human historical experience is devalued. Since moral and ethical choices made by individuals do not affect the course of events, but only ritual acts which connect the moment with divine acts outside of time, those choices and the persons making them become insignificant and unworthy of study. This leads directly to the fourth problem: the utter relativization of ethics. Since there is no single creator who could say, "This is the way I made you," since divine behavior was fundamentally perverse and arbitrary, and since ethical behavior was unrelated to ritual power, the choice of right and wrong became largely a matter of personal or group choice.

In and through all of this world view the goal was the amassing of power for the sake of personal security. Whether that security was conceived of as the freedom from want, as in the Near East, or the freedom from desire, as in the Far East, the basic aim and approach was the

same. One has only to study the sales records of Carlos Castaneda's books to discover that this conception of life is as attractive to twentieth century A.D. sophisticates as to thirtieth century B.C. sophisticates.[9] And one has only to reflect for a few moments to see how all of these tenets arise naturally if this physical universe is our only basis for forming our understanding of life.

Yet the Old Testament explicitly denies every one of these points and all of their attendant ones. Why? But perhaps more to the point, how? Where did the Hebrews get these startling, revolutionary ideas? If all the rest of the world, speculating upon the Given, comes up with one world view and the Hebrews alone come up with another, does this not suggest a different source for the Hebrew world view?

This is especially so in the light of the Biblical claim for the source of their ideas. Far from depicting themselves as an unusually perceptive people who could take the same raw materials and methods as their more highly sophisticated and educated neighbors and effect a philosophical breakthrough, the Hebrews present themselves as being stubborn and thickheaded, slow to depart from the beliefs of their pagan neighbors and quick to return to them. In effect they say, "We were not religiously perceptive, but religiously blind. God handed Himself to us on a platter. We tried everything to keep Him out, to avoid the unwanted dignity of being individually confronted with the holy God, and so set free to make choices, responsible for them when made, unable to manipulate Him, but free to trust, stripped of the comfortable anonymity of being a tiny cog in a great machine, called to the painful loneliness of a life of personal integrity before God in history. But, blessed be His name, He has broken through our walls and shown us life."

So the Hebrews tell us they did not discover God, but He discovered them. Such a claim is logical. This is the only way in which the doctrine of transcendence can be explained; this is the only way in which the doctrine of God's unity can be explained, etc., etc. These ideas can only be explained if they have come to us from outside the given. And if they have, then the Bible speaks to us with an authority all its own. That is, the authority of the Author of life. This being so, it has authority over us whether we give it any or not.

But some would argue that one can only hold such a position by committing intellectual suicide. One must, they say, ignore all recent study. One must believe the Bible was dictated word for word by God, etc. This is not the case. It is possible to see the Bible as having its ul-

timate source in God without being an obscurantist.

But perhaps one ought to ask first whether it *is* obscurantist to hold to a dictation theory of inspiration, or at least to some theory which would maximize Divine involvement while minimizing human involvement. It certainly seems so. There are a number of facts which argue against the Bible's having been "dropped on" an isolated group of people. A few of these are: much of the customary law of the Old Testament has nearly exact counterparts in older Near Eastern law codes; the design and embellishment of Solomon's Temple seems to have been Phoenician (Canaanite) in inspiration; sacrificial practices (although not rationales), were quite similar among the Hebrews and their neighbors; literary styles of Hebrew poetry are very similar to Canaanite styles;[10] author's styles and emphases change from book to book. All of these and more argue that revelation involved a great deal more human-Divine interchange than some of the older theories cared to permit.

However, these discoveries cannot invalidate the evidence of the distinctive world view of the Bible. They only serve to show that no simplistic view of the Bible's origins is possible. At the heart of any concept of Biblical revelation, however, must rest the claim that God is to be known through Israel's history. What is proposed here is that God did indeed speak to certain persons, preparing them for His activity in certain historic events and interpreting those events in advance (cf. Gen. 15:13-16; Ex. 14:15-18; Deut. 28:58-68; etc.). As a result, knowing that God was to be seen in their history, the Hebrew people recorded it with an accuracy and objectivity unheard of at that time and not overly common in our own. Continuing reflection upon the meaning of that history was prompted and guided by God. The accurate nature of the recording and the inspired nature of the reflection means that the Hebrew experience is as revelatory and as confrontive today as it was originally.

It is at this latter point that Barr tellingly criticizes Wright. Although Wright argues convincingly for revelation through history, he is somewhat skeptical concerning the Bible's accuracy concerning the details of the events. *That* something happened is sure. *What* happened is considerably less sure. Barr correctly concludes that these nebulous events with their profound, but human, commentary hardly provide a satisfactory basis for ascertaining the source of the Biblical theology.[11]

The writer would argue that Wright had the correct emphasis, but did not go far enough. The extreme skepticism of the last 100 years

concerning Biblical history writing and its accuracy is unwarranted.[12] Again and again in recent years the reliability of the Biblical witness to historic events has been attested. To be sure, the kind of exactitude which characterizes modern Western outlooks is often missing, but this is not a part of the interest in that place and time and its lack in no way affects the essential reliability of the witness.

But all that has been said thus far could be fitted into a sort of pseudo-dictation theory. How is one to explain those commonalities previously mentioned? And if one insists on linking revelation with history, what is the place of the poets, or even of the prophets, where historical event is either lacking or very far in the background?

Although these appear to be very separate questions, the same point addresses both concerns. Thus, they will be treated together. God never spoke in abstractions. Rather, He spoke in and through the history and thought forms of the day in so far as possible. If you will, He incarnated Himself in these. Writers inspired by Him interacted with those events and ideas and expressed the result in terms of their own perceptions and limitations. To be sure, those perceptions and limitations were in thrall to that vision of the all-consuming One which unifies Scripture, but just as Jesus' humanity was a crucial part of His being as living Word, so each writer's background and character is a crucial part of the written Word.

This is no less so of the poets and prophets than it is of the historians. All of their reflections, however dark or ecstatic; all their pronouncements, whether terrible or hopeful, are made in the light of a conception of God they cannot escape. And that conception of God is rooted in Israel's overall historical experience. Not in some isolated event, but in the totality. Why are Israel's psalms so similar to Ugarit's in form but so different in theology? To the extent that they share a common historical context they are the same. And to the extent that the Psalms reflect that overwhelming conception of God borne out of her special historical context they are different.

This conception of revelation which sees God becoming incarnate in specific history and ideas means several things. First of all, it is inappropriate to make the Bible the last word on matters relating to the physical sciences. Its purpose is not to express abstract scientific fact. Its purpose is to confront men and women in their own lives with the reality of a God who cannot be manipulated and yet can be trusted. In other words, its purpose is to convey spiritual truth in concrete relationally-oriented terms. Since matters pertaining to the physical

sciences are more or less peripheral to the Bible's major purpose, we ought not to take it as a textbook in those areas. At the same time, let it be said that when the Bible does mention these areas, its level of accuracy has been much higher than anything we could expect from other ancient literature. But wherein the conceptions of the day were not patently false to that world view implicit in the nature of God, they were allowed to stand (e.g., the "windows of heaven" in Gen. 7:11).

Furthermore, such an understanding of the process of revelation points up the lack of wisdom in defending the Bible's authority from the viewpoint of errors or lack of errors. The argument for authority must rest upon the overall nature and impact of the Bible rather than upon the exactitude of this number or the precision of that date, especially when this exactitude or precision is posited to exist in a hypothetical autograph, but does not exist in present documents. This is not to say that the reliability of the Scripture is of no concern. It is of great concern. But that reliability must be seen in terms of the standards of that day, against the background of the literature of that day and in the light of the Bible's overall purpose, not in terms of a syllogistic scheme of perfection.

Finally, such an understanding highlights the importance of interpretation. Four outcomes of paganism were cited above. They were: (1) deity was conceived of as continuous with nature; (2) deity can be manipulated through imitative magic; (3) human historical experience is devalued, and (4) ethics become completely relativized. Given this situation, God could not simply drop a systematic theology book upon the world. He had to prove that He was transcendent, that He could not be manipulated, that human freedom and responsibility are real, and that there are consistent ethical standards for all of creation. This proof could only be given in the crucible of specific human experience. But this means that the time-bound and the timeless are caught up together in the Scriptures. Thus, the task of interpreting the contemporary significance of what was said 2000 years ago will always be with us. However, let it be said, that significance can be discerned with less difficulty than some would have us believe.

In summary, we have argued that the Bible's distinctive world view supports its claim to have its ultimate origin in God, so that it is revelatory both as to its beginnings and as to its impact today. This distinctive world view is the result of certain specific events in history as well as the general historical experience of the Hebrew people. God was

distinctively active in both elements and inspired certain individuals to give authoritative interpretation to those elements, both before and after the fact. This is the Biblical claim and is the only adequate explanation of the phenomena.

To take such a position is not to ignore recent discoveries about the relation of Israel to her neighbors and their culture. If these findings increase the complexity of the process of revelation and inspiration, they do not render it an impossibility. He who translated Himself into a specific human form and culture, fraught with weaknesses and limitations, bound by the forms of the day, yet able to unveil the fullness of Himself to all persons in all times is able to speak and indeed has.

NOTES

[1]James Barr, "Revelation Through History in the Old Testament and in Modern Theology," *Interpretation* XVII (1963), pp. 193-205.

[2]James Barr, *The Bible in the Modern World,* Harper and Row Publishers, New York: 1973, p. 118.

[3]John Bright, *The Authority of the Old Testament,* Abingdon Press, Nashville: 1967, p. 29.

[4]Barr, *op. cit.,* p. 120.

[5]Emile Cailliet, *Journey Into Light,* Zondervan Publishing House, Grand Rapids: 1968, pp. 15-18.

[6]John Bright, *op. cit.,* p. 148f.

[7]G. E. Wright, *The Old Testament Against Its Environment,* SCM Press Ltd., London: 1950, p. 28f. Cf. also *The God Who Acts,* SCM Press Ltd., London: 1952.

[8]David Noel Freedman, "In Memoriam G. E. Wright," *Bulletin of the American Schools of Oriental Research,* 220 (Dec. 1975), p. 3.

Cf. Brevard Childs, *Biblical Theology in Crisis,* Westminster Press, Philadelphia; 1970, p. 76.

[9]Carlos Castaneda, *The Teachings of Don Juan: A Yaqui Way of Knowledge,* University of California Press, Los Angeles: 1968. This book had gone through 20 printings by March, 1974. It details how a UCLA anthropology student became an apprentice of an Indian sorcerer and gained magical powers. Four subsequent books continuing the chronicle of Castaneda's apprenticeship have sold nearly as well.

[10]Psalm 29 is said to be indistinguishable from certain Canaanite hymns. Cf. Mitchell Dahood, *Psalms 1-50,* Anchor Bible, Vol. 16, Doubleday and Co., Inc., Garden City, New York: 1966, pp. 174-180.

[11]James Barr, "Revelation . . .," *op. cit.,* p. 198f.

[12]Cf. Kenneth A. Kitchen, *Ancient Orient and Old Testament,* The Tyndale Press, London: 1966.

Structural Aspects in the Old Testament Prophets' Work and Message

by G. Herbert Livingston

During the past three decades, much research has been done in the area of analysis of the books of the major and minor prophets. This research has been sparked partially by the form-critical methods proposed by Hermann Gunkel and by a comparative study of the Biblical text with the mass of non-Biblical inscriptions of the ancient Near East made available by archaeological work.

Much of the research done has been fragmentary, that is, concerned with limited passages, or selected passages, in the prophetic books. The research also has been influenced by a growth concept of literary types undergirded by a humanistic evolutionary way of thinking, and a preoccupation with a psychological basis for the prophet's spiritual life. The result has often been a confused and misleading explanation of the prophet's work and message. Yet, solid work has been done which can be helpful for a fruitful study of Old Testament prophecy.

The purpose of this essay is to glean from this research insights which can help us to see more clearly important structural aspects of the prophets' work and message. These structural aspects will be concerned mainly with the covenant, the lawsuit, and the function of the messenger as they relate to the actual text of the books of the prophets.

An effort will be made to show how the covenant structure, the lawsuit structure and the messenger structure relate to each other and how they find expression in the Scriptural text. In effect, this shapes up as a method of studying the books of the prophets in their parts and in their totality. But the suggestions in this paper will not be limited to literary matters. An effort will be made, also, to show how the structural elements and the literary expressions give us an underlying structure of inter-personal dynamics between God, prophet and other

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people, whether individuals or groups. The implications of this kind of study will then be summarized.

The Covenant Structure

Students of the Old Testament have long recognized that the covenant was important in God's revelation to man, but until recent years, it has been regarded, basically, as a theological concept. At various times during the first half of this century, newly discovered inscriptions alerted scholars that the covenant had a much more practical function in the ancient Near East, but it was not until George Mendenhall published his article, "Covenant Forms in Israelite Tradition"[1] in 1954 that, English speaking people at least, were made aware of the implications that the non-Biblical treaties, especially Hittite, had for Old Testament studies.

Since that time, a flurry of articles and books on the covenant have appeared and as a result our understanding of the Old Testament has been broadened, deepened and enriched. Primarily, these new studies of the covenant have centered about the Pentateuch, the work of Joshua and the kingship of David, but the prophetic books have not been overlooked. This is true in spite of the fact that the word covenant (*berit*) occurs only 12 times in Isaiah, 23 times in Jeremiah, 18 times in Ezekiel, six times in Daniel and ten times in all the Minor Prophets, half of these in Hosea.

As understood now, the covenants of the ancient Near East were basically political in nature and would be better called treaties. These treaties were of two types: the parity treaties between equals or nearly equal nations, and the suzerainty treaties between an emperor and the vassal kings of his empire. Dennis J. McCarthy[2] has given us ten such treaties in English translation. Analysis of ancient Near Eastern treaties has indicated that the following components occur in them. In some treaties all of them are found; in others, most of the components are found.

The components are: (1) titles of the Great King, (2) a list of stipulations or laws, (3) history of previous treaty relations, (4) a document clause, (5) a god list, (6) a list of curses and blessings.

Attempts to apply these components to the covenant between God and the patriarchs, between God and Israel at Sinai, between God and Israel at Shechem, and between God and David have been both fruitful and frustrating. The attempts have been frustrating because, in the in-

stances just mentioned, accounts of covenant-making events are preserved, but not the actual covenant documents. Hence, the covenant components are scattered with no strict order of sequence. When the covenant components have been applied to the book of Deuteronomy, there has been more success. Meredith Kline[3] has done us great service by analyzing this book in terms of the covenant.

One fact is clear, in utilizing the covenant form as a framework for the newly revealed faith of the patriarchs, Moses and Israel, God saw to it that all references to pagan deities were removed and relegated to the status of mortal enemies of the faith.

Efforts to apply the new understanding of the covenant form and its formulations to the major and minor prophets have been fruitful but even more frustrating. As mentioned earlier, the word covenant does occur in the writings of the major prophets, more in Jeremiah than in Isaiah or in Ezekiel. The word does appear a few times in Hosea but rarely in any of the other minor prophets. None of the covenant components, as such, are explicitly mentioned. In spite of these handicaps, research has made it clear that the covenant certainly undergirds the themes and vocabulary of these prophets. The covenant serves somewhat like a "hidden agenda" in their messages.

The first component of the covenant, the titles, has parallels in the phrase, "I am Yahweh," which, with some variations, occurs in covenant sections of all the books of the Pentateuch. The phrase is frequent in Isaiah and Ezekiel, less frequent in Jeremiah and the minor prophets. The covenant statement, "You are my people, I am your God," or variations of it, begins in Exodus 6:7 and can be found in both the major and minor prophets. Descriptions of and reference to the mighty acts of God in the Exodus, the wilderness wanderings, and the conquest shows up in the original covenant events in the Pentateuch and in most of the prophetic writings.

An important component in the covenant was the list of stipulations, the do's and don'ts of covenant relationships. Many apodictic and casuistic laws – the Rabbis count 613 – are scattered through the Pentateuch. Taking Mendenhall's[4] guidelines, other scholars have found many parallels in the prophetic writings to the Mosaic laws. Many of the prophets' accusations center on violations of Mosaic law. James Muilenberg closes one of his discussions of Old Testament prophecy with these words, "So today we no longer speak of Moses *or* the prophets, or of the law or prophecy, but rather of Moses *and* the prophets.[5]

The book of Deuteronomy has a number of conditional sentences

tied to the keeping or breaking of the law. Many similar conditional sentences can be found in the writings of both the major and the minor prophets.

A covenant component containing curses and blessings can be found in several of the books of the Pentateuch. They are most clearly presented in Deuteronomy 27 and 28. Delbert Hillers[6] has gathered a number of curse or malediction statements found in various ancient Near East inscriptions which parallel statements in the Pentateuch covenant passages and in pronouncements of the Old Testament prophets. He lists them under 20 categories.

The Hittite treaties have a document clause which insists that copies of the treaty be placed in the vassal's temple and read periodically. This procedure is like that recorded in Exodus 24:4-7; 34:1-4; Deuteronomy 27:1-3; 28:58 and can be seen also in Isaiah 34:16; Jeremiah 36 and possibly Habakkuk 2:2-3.

In addition to covenant components, there is a significant vocabulary carry over from ancient Near Eastern treaties and from Pentateuchal covenants to the writing prophets. W. L. Moran has given us basic information about the word love (*'ahav*) as a treaty and a covenant word.[7]

H. B. Huffmon has made a similar study of the word know (*yada'*)[8]. And D. R. Hillers has provided ties between older covenants and the prophets with a study of good (*tob*) and goodness (*tobah*).[9]

Much the same kind of correlation could be done with such words as steadfast love (*hesed*) and mercy (*hen*), righteousness (*sedeqah*) and uprightness (*yaśar*), justice (*mishpat*) and peace (*shalom*). On the negative side, words like guilt (*asham*) and iniquity (*aven*), sin (*ḥattat*) and err (*'avôn*), rebel (*pesha'*) and wicked (*rasha'*) could yield profitable comparisons between the Sinaitic covenant and prophetic proclamation.

In summary one may say that the covenant provides the framework for other structures that have more unity and continuity. One of these structures is . . .

The Judicial or Lawsuit Structure

The "controversy" passages in the writing prophets have their background in the scenes at the gate of the city where complaints and accusations were made against offenders of person and property, or even quarrels outside of court (Gen. 26:17ff., Gen. 31:26, 30; Judges 6:30ff.; 8:1; Neh. 5:6f., 13:11, 17; Job 13:6). Quarrels between heads of state also form part of the background; a good example is Judges 10:17-12:6.

G. E. Wright says the controversy pattern is based on the suzerainty treaty and makes an analysis of Deuteronomy 32 to illustrate his point.[10]

The personnel of the lawsuit are the judge, perhaps an advocate for the covenant, the accused, and sometimes those who witness the proceedings. The several phases of the trial would be the summons to court, the declaration of charges or indictment, the rebuttal of the accused, the pronouncement of the sentence, conditions of life during judgment, and possible conditions for pardon. It could be expected that a recorded description of a lawsuit procedure would reflect these phases of trial and judgment; and this is indeed the case.

The simplest format of a lawsuit account may be given as (1) a summons to hear, (2) an accusation, (3) therefore . . ., and (4) an announcement. But the writing prophets were not inclined to follow simple patterns; so we have variation of components in the lawsuits portrayed by them. The best examples are Isaiah 1:1-31 (some would limit it to 1:1-3; 10-20); 3:13-17; possibly 5:1-7; 41:21-29; 57:3-21; 58:1-14; Hosea 2:1-23; 4:1-19; 5:1-12:1; 12:1-14:9; Amos 3:1-4:13; 5:1-6:14; Micah 1:2-2:13; 3:1-8; 3:9-5:15; 6:1-7: 20; (Jer. 2:1-4:4 and Ezek. 17: 1-24).

Since Micah 6:1ff. is a classic, we may begin with it to see its components: 6:1a an appeal to listen; 6:1b the prophet ordered to plead the case; 6:2a appeal to mountains and hills to listen; 6:2b announcement of lawsuit; 6:3 the accused questioned; 6:4 God's acts at Exodus, 6:5a His acts at Conquest; 6:5b goal of the trial; 6:6-7 rebuttal of accused; 6:8 You know! 6:9-12 accusation; 13-16 sentence; 7:1-7 soliloquy of sorrow; 7:8-10 confession of accused; 7:11-17 Hope given; 7: 18-20 exaltation of the divine judge.

Now let us go back and look at the other lawsuits in Micah. In regard to Micah 1:2-2:13, we may make this analysis: 1:2a appeal to listen; 1:2b announcement of lawsuit; 1:3-4 majesty of judge; 1:5 accusatory questions; 1:6a therefore . . .; 1:6b-7a announcement of sentence "I will"; 1:7b reason; 1:8a therefore . . .; 1:8b-16 lamentation (by prophet?); 2:1-2 accusation; 2:3a therefore . . .; 2:3b identification of judge; 2:3c-5a announcement of sentence, "I devise"; 2:5b-6 result of judgment; 2:7-9 accusatory questions and charges; 2:10-11 announcement of sentence; 2:12-13 announcement of restoration, "I will."

Micah 3:1-8 may be analyzed in this manner: 3:1a appeal to listen; 3:1b announcement of lawsuit; 3:2-3 accusation; 3:4 announcement of sentence; 3:5a identification of deity; 3:5b accusation; 3:6a there-

fore . . .; 3:6b-7 announcement of sentence; 3:8 authority and qualification of the advocate.

Micah 3:9-5:15 may be divided in this manner: 3:9a appeal to listen; 3:9b-11 accusation; 3:12a therefore . . .; 3:12b announcement of sentence; 4:1-13 announcement of restoration, "I will"; 5:1a summons; 5:1b reason; 5:2 announcement of future ruler; 5:3a therefore . . .; 5:3b announcement of sentence; 5:3c-9 announcement of restoration, "I will"; 5:10a identification of judge; 5:10b-15 announcement of sentence, "I will."

The book of Hosea is also basically comprised of lawsuits. This sensitive eighth century prophet is even more creative than Micah in mixing the lawsuit components. In effect he interweaves them so that they take on a fabric pattern. Hosea 2:1-23 is more of a family quarrel than a formal lawsuit, though its components are present, and 5:1-12:1 is too long to analyze here, so we will concentrate on 4:1-19 and 12:2-14:9.

First let us look at 4:1-19: 4:1a appeal to listen; 4:1b announcement of lawsuit; 4:1c reason; 4:2 accusation; 4:3a therefore . . .; 4:3b announcement of sentence; 4:4a warning; 4:4b reason; 4:5a therefore . . .; 4:5b-6a sentence "I will"; 4:6b reason; 4:6c sentence "I will"; 4:6d reason; 4:6e sentence "I will"; 4:7a accusation; 4:7b sentence "I will"; 4:8-9a accusation; 4:9b-10a sentence "I will"; 4:10b reason; 4:11-13 accusation; 4:14 sentence; 4:15 warning; 4:16a reason; 4:16b-19 sentence.

And now Hosea 12:2-14:9: 12:2 announcement of lawsuit; 12:3-4 reference to Jacob; 12:5 identification of deity; 12:6a therefore . . .; 12:6b exhortation; 12:7-8 accusation; 12:9a God's acts in Exodus; 12:9b announcement of restoration "I will"; 12:10 God's acts through prophets; 12:11 accusatory questions and charge; 12:12 reference to Jacob; 12:13 God's acts in Exodus; 12:14a accusation; 12:14b sentence; 13:1-2 accusation; 13:3a therefore . . .; 13:4a identification of deity; 13:4b God's goal for Israel; 13:5 God's acts in wilderness; 13:6 accusation; 13:7a therefore . . .; 13:7b-8 sentence "I will"; 13:9-11 God's anguish; 13:12-13 rebuke and sentence; 13:14 announcement of restoration "I will"; 13:15-16a sentence; 13:16b reason; 13:16c sentence; 14:1a exhortation to return; 14:1b reason; 14:2-3 proposed prayer; 14:4a announcement of restoration "I will"; 14:4b reason; 14:5-8 announcement of restoration "I will"; 14:9a rhetorical questions; 14:9b exaltation of deity; 14:9c the two ways.

For the purpose of this article, we will examine only one more lawsuit, namely in Isaiah 1. It may be divided as follows: 1:1a appeal to

listen; 1:2b announcement "Lord spoken"; 1:2c-9 accusation; 1:10 appeal to listen to the verdict; 1:11 accusatory question; 1:11b authority and identity of the judge; 1:11c-14 divine displeasure and accusation; 1:15 announcement of sentence; 1:16-18a exhortation; 1:18b authority and identity of the judge; 1:19-20a the alternatives; 1:20b authority of the announcement; 1:21-23 accusation; 1:24a therefore . . .; 1:24b authority and the identity of the judge; 1:24c-25 announcement of sentence "I will"; 1:26-27 announcement of restoration "I will"; 1:28-31 sentence.

On the basis of the analysis, several observations may be made. (1) As in the covenant formulations, care is taken to stress the authority and identity of God and this feature tends to tie the covenant and the lawsuit together. The lawsuit proceeds from the covenant, but the Lord God is in charge of both. (2) The lawsuit tends to refer to the covenant acts of God, in the Exodus and later, as the basis of the court action. (3) The accusations brought against the people and leaders are that the covenant laws, especially the Ten Commandments, had been violated. (4) The sentences proclaimed against Israel are parallel to the curses of the covenant. (5) The announcements of restoration are parallel to the blessings of the covenant.

There is one feature of the lawsuit content which points in a different direction than the covenant for its origin. Now and then in the lawsuits the phrase, "Thus says the Lord," with varying additions, designates the authority and identity of the judge/plaintiff. This phrase has its home in the ancient Near Eastern system of sending communications via messengers. The messenger system was not limited to non-Hebrew people; the Israelites used this method too.

The Messenger Structure

It is remarkable that in the many studies made of the books of the prophets very little literary correlation has been made between the prophetic messages and the messenger system, except in the last few decades. Orthodox scholars have been primarily engrossed in the important prophecy/fulfillment and eschatological thrust of prophecy. Nineteenth century liberals were concerned about showing that the Old Testament prophets were historically human and that their ideas were of prime value. Gunkel and his immediate disciples were attracted to short oracles of "threat" and "reproach" and their origins. Hölscher and his followers saw mainly the psychological traits of the prophet's experience.

In the opening chapter of his important book, Claus Westermann[11] notes that L. Köhler (1923) seems to be the first to tie the greater amount of the work and message of the prophets with the work and messages formula of messengers. During the 1930's and 40's, an occasional article appeared in European journals discussing this or that passage as a messenger speech. Even J. Lindblom has this one sentence paragraph, ". . . there is in the giving and formulation of the oracles an intimate connection between the earlier and the later prophets."[12] But Lindblom was not interested in "the formulation of the oracles" as messenger speeches; he was looking for phenomena that would help him in his overall history of religions' approach to prophecy.

Claus Westermann's book has been the primary vehicle which has brought the importance of the ancient messenger structure to the fore, as a fundamental structure for Old Testament prophecy.

One could take time to analyze a few of the mass of ancient Near Eastern letters, mostly written in cuneiform script on clay tablets, and correlate their standard formula with those found in the narratives of the Old Testament. A few of those who have done some of this correlation are James Ross[13] and J. S. Holliday.[14]

We will turn rather to a few of the several dozen accounts of messenger communication in the Old Testament for guidance. This material, too, has been examined by various scholars, among whom are Claus Westermann,[15] and Klaus Koch.[16]

The earliest account of sending messengers with a message is found in Genesis 32:3-5. For the moment we will only highlight these phrases: ". . . Jacob sent . . . he commanded them saying, 'Thus shall you speak to my lord Esau; Your servant Jacob says thus . . . .' " We would note these items: (a) Jacob's decision to send a message, (b) his authoritative words to the messengers, (c) the identity of the addressee, (d) the identity of the sender, and (3) the authoritative, "says thus."

The next incident is found in Genesis 45:9-13. The important words are, ". . . go to my father, and say to him, 'Thus says your son Joseph.' " Note the commissioning verbs "go," "say," the identity of the addressee, the identity of the sender, and the authoritative words, "Thus says."

Numbers 22:15ff. gives a glimpse of the delivery of a message. Observe these phrases, ". . . Balak sent . . . they came to Baalam and said to him, 'Thus says Balak the son of Zippor, ...' " It should be noted that Balak made a decision to send a message, that the messengers transmitted the message orally, the addressee is identified, there is the

authoritative phrase, "Thus says . . ." and the identification of the sender.

There is a similar situation in Judges 11:12ff. In verses 14 and 15 note these phrases, "And Jephthah sent messengers again to the king of the children of Ammon and said to him, Thus says Jephthah . . . ." The same components are in this sentence as in those mentioned above. There are many other illustrations of these standard phrases or formula. We draw attention especially to II Kings 18:28-35 and 19:2-4.

Turn back now to Exodus 3:14ff. and note these words, "And God said to Moses, 'I AM THAT I AM:' and he said, 'Thus you shall say to the children of Israel, I AM has sent me unto you . . .' "; and in verse 16 underline the verbs, "God . . . *say* to them." Now move on to chapter five, verse one, "And afterward Moses and Aaron went in and told Pharoah, 'Thus says the Lord God of Israel.' " In these sentences we have the selection of Moses as a messenger, the identity of the sender, the command to carry the message, the verbs, *send, go* and *say.* We also have the transmission of the message orally, the identity of the addressee, as well as the messengers, the authoritative words, "Thus says . . ." and the identity of the sender. A large amount of the narrative material in Exodus and Numbers is framed in this messenger structure (see pp. 253-258 of my book).[17]

In the book of Exodus, we see Moses commissioned by God to fill three roles for Him. He was called to be His messenger to the Israelites (Ex. 3 and 6). In chapters 19-24 he was commissioned to serve as mediator of the covenant which was established between God and Israel at Sinai. In chapters 32 through 34, Moses was God's messenger, mediator and advocate in a judicial proceeding against a people who had broken the covenant. The same could be said of Samuel in the event of king-making in I Samuel 8 and 12; so also Elijah on Mt. Carmel (I Kgs. 18). Not all of the earlier prophets are portrayed as filling all three tasks, but whether the prophet was Nathan (II Sam. 12), or Ahijah (I Kgs. 14), Micaiah (I Kgs. 22), or Elisha (II Kgs. 7:1), they were all messengers of God.

The messenger speeches of the pre-classical prophets are primarily preserved for us in narrative frameworks. This feature is somewhat true of the writing prophets, but in the books of the major and minor prophets we have many messenger speeches apart from a narrative. We need to look more closely at these messenger speeches.

First, let us ask, who was involved in the messenger system? It is fairly easy to answer that God, the Lord, the prophet himself, and the

addressee(s). Next we may ask, what are the phases of this system of communication? Phase one is the decision of the sender to send a message; phase two is the giving of the message to a selected messenger(s); phase three is the transmission of the message in either oral or written form; phase four is the delivery of the message. The process may be reversed so that there would be phase five in which the addressee(s) respond to the message; phase six the transmission of the new message back to the sender, or at least a report is made; phase seven would be the messenger reporting to the original sender. Communication could continue by passing through these several phases.

The phases could be grouped into two distinct contact events, the revelatory contact and the proclamation contact. Phases one, two, and possibly seven could be tied to the revelatory contact; whereas, phases four and five would be aspects of the delivery contact. These phases may serve as a framework within which we can analyze the literary expressions of the messenger structure.

We usually label the initial revelatory contact as the prophet's call experience. In the writings of the prophets, we have Amos' personal testimony to a previous call, ". . . the Lord took me . . . and . . . said to me, 'Go, prophesy to my people Israel' " (7:15). Note the identity of the sender, the selecting and commissioning verbs, *took, go, prophesy,* and the identity of the addressee. The account in the book of Jonah (1:1-2) is similar, "Now the word of the Lord came to Jonah the son of Amittai, saying, 'Arise, go to Nineveh, that great city, and cry against it . . . ." The same components are present; the identity of the sender; the selecting verb, *came*; the identity of the messenger; the commissioning verbs, *arise, go, cry against;* and the identity of the addressee.

There are longer accounts of Isaiah's call in chapter six, of Jeremiah's in 1:4-10, and of Ezekiel's in chapters 1-3. In Isaiah we find the identity and majesty of the sender (6:1-4); the selecting verb, *send* (6:8); the commissioning verbs, "*go, tell* . . ." (6:9a); and the identity of the addressee, this people (6:9b). Dialogue between the sender and the messenger is a feature of this account.

Allow me to point out similar traits in Jeremiah chapter one. The identity of the sender (1:4a) "The word of the Lord came . . ."; the identity of the messenger (1:4b) "me . . . (Jeremiah); the selecting verb, send (1:7); the commissioning verbs, *go, speak* (1:7); the identity of the addressees, . . . "to all" (1:7, cf. 1:10). Again, dialogue between sender and messenger is a feature of this initial revelatory contact.

Unusual imagery is found in the call experience of Ezekiel, but the

basic traits are there. The majesty and identity of the sender is found in 1:4-28; the statement of selection is found in 2:1-3a and it has the verb, *send,* in it (also 3:6); the identity of the messenger is in the phrase, "Son of man" (Ezek. 2:1a, 3a) etc.; the commissioning verbs, "eat this roll, *go, speak*," are in 3:1b, 4, 11; the identity of the addressee is found in 2:3, etc., (Israel). Dialogue is not a feature of Ezekiel's call, but unlike Isaiah's and Jeremiah's calls, the words of authority, "Thus says . . ." are joined with the identity of the sender, "the Lord God" and are found in 2:4 and 3:11.

In the books of each of these prophets, reference is made to repeated instances when revelatory contact occurred between God and the prophet. It is striking that in these other incidents the verb, *send* (*shalaḥ*) is largely missing.

Apart from the book of Daniel, all of the major and minor prophetic books have superscriptions which designate the office of the prophet as a vision, or burden. Not in every superscription is the sender identified, but where this element is missing the content of the book makes it clear that the sender was the Lord God. And even when the noun, "*vision*," or the verb, "*saw*," occurs, there is no doubt the message is to be words, with visual aids (symbolic acts) as supplements to the message.

An examination of the messenger speeches shows that they either are announcements of judgment or of salvation. Both announcements are similar in format and content with the accusations and announcements of sentence and the announcements of restoration found in the lawsuits. Many times they can be distinguished only by the introductory sentences which precede each one.

In regard to the units dealing with judgment, both in the lawsuits and in the messenger speeches, there are these common elements: (a) the words of authority, and identity, "Thus says the Lord . . ."; (b) the accusations; (c) reasons; (d) the connective "therefore . . ."; (e) the announcement of sentence, "I will"; (f) the results of judgment. Many examples could be brought forward to illustrate similarities and differences.

In regard to the units dealing with restoration and salvation, both in lawsuits and in the messenger speeches, there are these common elements: (a) the words of authority and identity, "Thus says the Lord . . ."; (b) often an exhortation; (c) resumé of the situation, (d) announcement of restoration, "I will", (e) results of restoration, (f) often an affirmation of the majesty of Savior. Again, if time and space permitted, many examples could be given to illustrate similarities and differences.

In the prophetic writings, we find a range of variety in the arrangement of these messages, the sequence of their internal components and their length. Often, it would seem, the placement of messages of judgment and salvation has no logical basis; rather they seem to be laid out to give a theme or an impression of movement, such as is done in modern visual media.

Turning to the delivery contact phases of messenger communication, we find that a narrative frame or, at least, introductory sentences alert the reader that the messenger is speaking to the addressee(s). The messages are virtually the same type and the same format as in the lawsuit and in the revelatory contact.

Here and there in the prophetic writings we pick up some of the responses of the addressees indirectly in such phrases as "you say . . ." or "they say . . . ." In Amos 7, in Jonah 3, in Isaiah 7 and 36-39 we find accounts of the actual verbal and action responses of leaders and populace. The book of Jeremiah provides us with the most extensive accounts of how leaders and people responded to his messages. Some, like Zedekiah, requested more information from the Lord, but most, unfortunately, were negative, even violent, endangering the life of the prophet.

This same prophet, Jeremiah, is the one who left us with complaints and prayers of agony which reveal to us a bit of the inner struggles when he reported back to God the results of his message delivery.

You may ask, how does a knowledge of these structures and their literary expressions really help me to know the prophets?

I can do no more than summarize with a few suggestions on how to proceed further.

(1) A keen awareness of the covenant, lawsuit and messenger structures and their literary expressions should help a student to evaluate more accurately the prophets' experience in the presence of God. Were they ecstatic trip experiences as some have tried to maintain? The data that I have laid out would point in a different direction. God revealed Himself as a Person and honored the integrity of the prophet's own selfhood. Hence, what happened between them was on the level of interpersonal relationships; not as peer to peer, but as Sovereign to servant. The presence of God was overwhelming and glorious, His words were freighted with authority, and His commission utterly changed and dominated the prophets' lives. Yet, the prophet could talk back to God, could pour out his complaints, even accuse God. And in those occasions, the prophet received rebuke, advice and challenge. He also re-

ceived mercy, strength, and victory.

When one examines these revelatory contacts, one finds that almost every emotion except fear is anthropomorphically attributed to God. The negative emotions are directed against idolatry and the people's involvement in it; the positive emotions directed toward the repentant, the remnant of Israel who would return to the covenant relationship. Obviously, one would find the former in announcements of judgment and sentence, and the latter in the announcements of salvation.

It would appear that beneath these anthropopathisms is a basic dilemma which may be stated thus: the Chosen People, Israel, have joined themselves to idols; therefore, if God follows through the strict letter of the covenant curses, the Chosen People will be wiped out and God will lose His "beachhead" in a pagan world; if God does not bring judgment on His Chosen People He will violate His attributes of justice and holiness. The result is suffering. Cannot you hear the sobs of God in this passage from Hosea, "How can I give you up, O Ephraim? How can I hand you over, O Israel? How can I make you like Admah! How can I treat you like Zeboiim! My heart recoils within me, my compassion grows warm and tender. I will not execute my fierce anger, I will not again destroy Ephraim, for I am God and not man, the Holy One in your midst, and I will not come to destroy." God's only remedy was the salvation of a remnant.

Probing into the data, one finds that in regard to the revelatory contact, the prophet neither sought nor induced the experience, he was not manipulating God, he did not lose his self-awareness. But the call experience brought a factor into his life that was to goad his soul to the end of his days. The prophet, too, faced a basic dilemma. If he faithfully proclaimed the judgments of God, he would be in serious trouble with the people and their leaders. If he refused to proclaim God's sentence on the people, as Jeremiah almost did (Jer. 20:9), he would come under God's displeasure and judgment. For clear statements of this dilemma see Jeremiah 1:17 and 19; Ezekiel 3:16-21, and a not quite so clear statement in Isaiah 6:6, 9-13. One sees this dilemma lurking in Amos, in Hosea, in Jonah, in Micah, even in Habakkuk.

This basic dilemma in itself is enough to account for the "strange" behavior of the prophets and one does not have to bring in the phenomena of ecstasy to help out. An adequate exegesis of passages dealing with the revelatory contact would take all these factors into account.

(2) A keen awareness of the covenant, lawsuit and messenger structures and their literary expressions should help a student of the

prophetic writings as he seeks to find in them source material for preaching. He should quickly realize that picking here and there for sermon texts, or drawing together a series of proof-texts for a topical sermon is inadequate. One should look at units as wholes, at units as related to each other, at the books as wholes. Then and only then can the impact of these great men of God and their messages sink deeply into the mind and heart of the listener. These prophets are difficult to study, they are difficult to live with, but when taken seriously they will change peoples' lives for the better.

(3) A keen awareness of the covenant, lawsuit and messenger structures and their literary expressions should help a pastor to understand better his vocational calling, his social responsibilities and his practice of pastoral care.

A preacher without a call is an anomaly; He is a living contradiction. Like the messenger of old, a true preacher must experience a call to preach; he/she must receive a commission and strength from the Holy Spirit to perform the preacher's task. Authority and power go together, and they must be joined in the preacher's life. The preacher must be a real person. He/she must be open before God and man, and be willing to pay the price of faithful proclamation of the Word of God. The preacher must be a person of integrity, must be honest, pure of motive, permeated with love, and outgoing in concern for others. Priorities must be fixed on service to God and man rather than on such peripheral matters as salary or status.

A preacher without a strong sense of social responsibility is also an anomaly. Those who would say that to preach the Word is enough, that corrupt social and governmental structures and practices are peripheral, are not in the fellowship of the prophets. Those great men were not ascetics; they did not run from social evils; they faced them head on. They did not regard justice as simply abstract sets of laws. To them justice was compassion put into practice. Corruption must be denounced but a call to change was also stressed. True they did not lead street demonstrations or armed revolution, but they did press the issues of corruption and injustice home to populace and leader with biting clarity and laid out a positive program of justice that would create a just and harmonious society.

Perhaps the prophets could be scored for not being very good listeners, but I imagine that they had already listened to the complaints and the schemes of the great and the small. Most important of all, they had listened to God. What we have in their books is the straight-forward

talk of brother to brother, of friend to friend. They were dealing with neighbors and did not need to be briefed by long case histories. They knew those people from childhood. The crisis was severe and issues had to be faced. God taught the prophets to deal with the people first at the point of their delusions, their false estimate of their own power and wisdom, the quality of their love. When this falsity was stripped away, then, next the prophets faced the leaders and the populace with the basic dilemma in which their sins had entrapped them. Briefly, their basic dilemma was this: if they would be Chosen People they must radically sever themselves from their much loved sex-worship. If they chose to be pagans under the guise of being Chosen People, they must suffer punishment at the hand of their God. To bring this issue to focus many of the prophets called their listeners to immediate decision.

Their verbal pictures of ultimate doom were frightful, but they never failed to exalt the power of the Savior God and to glory in the benefits of salvation. And it is not hard to find here and there the intercessory sobs of a broken heart.

Viewed in terms of the events of the eighth and seventh centuries, the prophets might be labeled as failures, for Israel did not respond to their shepherding concern. But the events of history have vindicated them and through the mercies of God the words of those prophets still haunt us and prod us to be true shepherds of the flock.

FOOTNOTES

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[9]D. R. Hillers, "A Note on Some Treaty Terminology in the Old Testament," BASOR 176 (1964), pp. 46-47.

[10]G. E. Wright, "The Lawsuit of God: A form-Critical Study of Deuteronomy 32" *Muilenburg Festschrift; Israel's Prophetic Heritage* (New York: 1962), pp. 26-67.

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God's Principle of Power

by Ronald Ball

I had not been a student at Asbury College for long before I developed a driving fascination for Dr. Henry Clay Morrison. Dr. Morrison was a president of Asbury College, the founder of Asbury Theological Seminary and, from all I could gather, an extraordinary man.

As my freshman year in 1968 progressed, I searched for and found several biographies of Morrison and spoke with a number of persons who had known him and heard him preach. I began to see a man whose walk with God was decidedly different from the average, and whose public ministry was, in itself, phenomenal. One man with whom I spoke related his recollection of the reaction on the college campus when Morrison would return after having been away for evangelistic services or possibly on a fund-raising campaign. He remembered how everyone would know Morrison was back because the entire atmosphere would suddenly and wonderfully be charged with the presence and power of God.

The information I was gathering about this exceptional man was intriguing. What was his secret? Why did he exercise such a powerful spiritual influence? His preaching eloquence was legendary and the results of his administrative skills are still obvious in the forms of the institutions he was so instrumental in either founding or maintaining. Yet, these factors failed to explain this man of God, with his life so filled with a supernatural dynamic.

My searching for the clue or clues that would point to the secret of Dr. Morrison's influence finally ended during a chapel of my senior year at the college in 1972. An associate of Morrison, Dr. J. C. McPheeters, was conducting a memorial service on the thirtieth anniversary of Morrison's death. Dr. McPheeters shared a little-known incident that took place not long before Morrison died. The two men were involved in a revival meeting in a small church not far from Wilmore and were preparing to enjoy a meal in the simple farmhouse home of a church family. After the food had been served, Morrison rose from his chair and called

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everyone to a special time of prayer. He knelt and prayed the prayer that gave me the clue to the secret of his power. Morrison, after having prayed for several other concerns, began to intercede for the family with whom the two were staying. His words became unusually intense as he said to God, ". . . and Lord, please save us from being ordinary Christians!" Dr. McPheeters affirmed that for years he had been unable to escape the implications of that brief prayer.

Morrison had power with people because he refused to be ordinary or merely mediocre in his relationship to Christ. He drew on the power supply of His Lord and found that supply more than adequate in every situation.

It is, however, one thing to examine a man like Morrison and be warmed and inspired. But it is often quite another matter to discover in our own lives the means of appropriating this same divine power to the same life-altering degree. The extremity of our times and the dangerous desperateness of the hour demands persons of this same spiritual caliber. God wants to produce outstanding spiritual leaders and has given us in His Word the divine principle of power that *must* be learned if we are to be at all effective in our frustrated, fragmented age. This principle of power is clearly expressed in chapter four of Zechariah.

To adequately grasp what this passage communicates, one must first understand the larger environmental context of verse six and then the immediate context. The sixth verse reads, ". . . this is the word of the Lord to Zerubbabel, Not by might, nor by power, but by My Spirit says the Lord of Hosts."

The larger environmental context has to do with the disaster that had befallen the nation of Israel. Their stubborn sin had finally resulted in the judgment of God. Their land had been razed, their beloved city of Jerusalem devastated, and the majority of the population carried away in slavery to Babylon. The nation had been stunned by the severity of God's punishment but had breathlessly clung to the faint hope of a restoration. When Zechariah was recording his words, this faint hope was beginning to be realized as a tiny remnant of the people were trickling back to their homeland.

The people struggled to raise again the walls of their city and lay a foundation for renewal. They were under the religious leadership of Haggai and Zechariah the prophets (and Joshua the high priest) and the political-military guidance of Zerubbabel. They obviously had competent leadership and were possessed of a commendable goal, but they were also surrounded by hostile and vindictive opponents. The odds

were against them and, at the point Zechariah was recording, the mass morale of the city-builders was low. They were depressed and discouraged and wondered if the job could ever be completed.

God then broke into the situation as He always does when His people are helpless against their enemies. An angel was commissioned and sent to Zechariah, who was caused to experience a series of important visions which contained needed messages for the harassed workers.

The most significant vision for our purposes is the fifth of a series of eight. Zechariah was asleep and was nudged awake by the angel-messenger, who showed him a golden lampstand with seven branches or candle-holders. It is here that the more immediate context of verse six enters into consideration. The lampstand represented the nation of Israel, yet the lampstand gave no light; it was completely dark. The angel asked Zechariah, "Do you understand what you see?" "No," replied the prophet, "I do not." The angel then offered an explanation of the vision by stating the words found in verse six which showed that only God's power could light again the lamp of Israel. He then continued,

> What are you, O great mountain? Before Zerubbabel you shall become a plain; and he shall bring forward the top stone with shouts of Grace, grace to it! Moreover the word of the Lord came to me saying, the hands of Zerubbabel have laid the foundation of this house, his hands shall also complete it. Then you will know that the Lord of Hosts has sent me to you – (vv. 7-8, R.S.V.).

The meaning for God's small group of tired builders was stupendous. It did not matter how limited their resources were, nor how meager their abilities were. The angel had made it clear. It is not by might nor by power but by My Spirit says the Lord of Hosts. The mountain of perplexities and difficulties which they faced would be leveled to a plain. God's promise was unmistakably clear. Zerubbabel's hands had begun the work and by Almighty God's decree, his hands would finish it! Zerubbabel would bring forward the top building stone and everyone would shout, "God's grace has done this!" What encouragement to these frightened people. God Himself had pledged His aid.

The terminology of the angel is particularly significant. "Not by might." The Hebrew word used here for might carries the idea of armed might or a well-equipped military force. In fact, it is translated "army" many times in the Old Testament. "Nor by power." The word used here for power tends more to convey the thought of a single, intense,

resolute force. The angel may have had some noted hero in mind from Israel's past. "Nor by David, nor Moses, nor Elijah, nor Joshua." "Nor by power."

God's message was to the point. He was telling Zechariah that deliverance would not come by a well-trained, heavily equipped army – "Not by might" – and it would not come by the heroic actions of an outstanding individual – "nor by power." Victory would come ". . . by My Spirit, says the Lord of Hosts."

This then is a burning, challenging enunciation of God's principle of power. "By My Spirit" is God's promise that through His infinite resources we can fulfill His purposes. It is also His sober warning that following any other avenue will end in dismal failure.

A memorable illustration of the vital importance of this principle of power took place in the interim period between Jesus' death and resurrection at the close of the Gospels, and the day of Pentecost at the beginning of the Acts.

The disciples apparently were sufficiently prepared to launch their mission of spreading the good news about Jesus. They had just completed the most incredible three year education a human could ever have experienced. They had learned intimately from Incarnate Deity, Jesus Christ Himself. It is impossible to measure what the steady influence of the Son of God must have accomplished within them. They also had witnessed the most dramatically important event in human history – the bodily resurrection of our Lord Jesus. It would be only logical to assume that now they were ready to march and take the world by storm. What more could possibly be needed? They were seemingly ready, but Jesus said no. He stopped them cold. It was not time to go. They lacked the most integrally important ingredient in spiritual success. They were not filled with and anointed by the Holy Spirit.

"You need to wait in Jerusalem," Jesus told them. "You need to wait for the promise of the Father. Don't leave, don't dare to mount an offensive against the kingdom of darkness unless you are first filled with the Holy Spirit." Jesus, in actuality, was telling them, "This is the word of the Lord . . . saying, it is not by might nor by power but by My Spirit says the Lord of Hosts!"

So they obeyed and waited. Then it happened! Pentecost! The sound of a rushing mighty wind filled the house where they were sitting, and they were all filled with the Holy Spirit. From then on nothing could halt the force God had unleashed through this tiny, obscure group. They preached Jesus that very day and thousands were stung,

stirred, smitten and swept into God's kingdom. They witnessed in the same city where their bitter enemies had murdered their Lord, and those very enemies could not withstand them. Some of them traveled to Samaria and preached Jesus there in spite of the generations-old Jewish prejudice that regarded the Samaritans as the most spiritually dull and unresponsive persons on earth. They went to Samaria and one of the greatest revivals of the early church erupted. Jesus was right; without God's principle of power operating within them, their influence would have been feeble, and their efforts futile.

This group of disciples before Pentecost was so similar to our class of graduating seniors. We have prepared three or four years in a quality institution dedicated to Biblically-oriented, evangelical teaching. We have been well-trained and have developed backgrounds that will prove valuable in our varied ministries. We have experienced the resurrection-reality of Jesus Christ being born within us by faith. Yet we will fail if we have not learned this principle of power for ourselves. Let God speak to us again: "It is not by academic expertise, nor by counseling competence, nor by solid education, nor by ecclesiastical friendship with a high denominational official, district superintendent nor bishop. It is by My Spirit says the Lord of Hosts!" As the words of a contempory Christian song states it, "O, once again we need that holy flame to meet the challenge of today."

It is at this junction that I am going to shift the focus of this message. Thus far we have been in the realm of what is often the theoretical. How can all we have considered be translated into life? People want to see a person's convictions in his conduct, and his beliefs in his behavior, and will be watching his ministry for power and consistency. How can you and I be the kind of persons through whom God can channel such power as we have been discussing?

There are a number of elements that could be suggested here, but I am going to restrict myself to the three that I consider most essential for inwardly appropriating God's principle of power.

If you are going to have a cutting edge for the Gospel and be anointed with such power as I have spoken of, then you must make commitment to Christ your constant concern. You must continually cultivate your relationship with Him. Your first loyalty is not to a denomination, a school or another person, but to the Savior, who freely died for you. Learn to love Him, to grow in appreciation of His splendid character, and to be enraptured by His delightful presence.

I still recall my deep spiritual hunger for an intimate walk with the

Lord Jesus during my freshman year in college. One evening a close friend brought me a recording made by some friends of his in Pennsylvania. I had been praying and longing for the richer communion with God I found promised in the Scriptures, and one song from his record greatly affected me as it touched this need. The music was simple and the lyrics far from profound. They sang, "To know Him, to know Him, to know Him is to love Him and to love Him is to walk with Him, my Jesus, my Savior, my Friend . . . ." This is what I am saying: make knowing Him your wholehearted goal.

You also should place humility high on your personal list of desires. Repent and forsake all jealousy, envy and any quarreling or selfishly ambitious spirit. These negative, destructive attitudes are not worthy of a Christian minister. Make John the Baptist your model in this area. Personally apply his selfless prayer to your own life and performance. "He must increase, but I must decrease" (Jn. 3:30).

If you are going to be the Spirit-filled productive minister God wills you to be, then you must also make prayer your top spiritual priority. This is the connecting link among all your spiritual disciplines and habits. Through this medium your experience of Christ is deepened and the fruit of humility is enabled to flourish. Learn more about private prayer where your heart contacts God through our Lord Jesus. The devil fears your prayers far more than your pulpit outreach or your counseling contribution. It is only as a man or woman of prayer, that any of us can genuinely realize the meaning of the phrase, "By My Spirit, says the Lord of Hosts."

When I was pursuing my first year of studies at Asbury Theological Seminary, Dr. Robert Coleman began having a positive influence upon me. I remember a man once telling me that when he and Dr. Coleman were classmates, the characteristic that was most prominent about Dr. Coleman was that he was a man of prayer. What an impression that statement made on a young seminarian! Lord, teach us to pray!

This semester I have been doing research on the great revival of the eighteenth century. This awakening came to be known as the Wesleyan Revival in England and the First Great Awakening in the American Colonies. The purpose of the project was to discover a clue leading to an understanding of God's pattern of reviving His people that would be applicable to today. I had read a number of works but still was unable to clearly determine a unifying, contributing factor until toward the end of the term. In a book entitled *The Christian Leaders of the Last Century* by J. C. Ryle, a nineteenth century Anglican bishop of Liver-

pool, England, I found the clue I needed.

Ryle also wanted to discover how his day could know revival as the eighteenth century had. In the book he examined 11 leaders whom he considered the most significant of the awakening. Among them were such men as John Wesley, George Whitefield and John Fletcher. In his final chapter he summarized the common elements among the men and sought to answer the question, "Why are we not experiencing like revival in England today?" His conclusion should jolt us awake to the need of our times as well as his. Ryle decided that the problem centered in two simple areas. His lament was that his day had neither the men nor the message of the eighteenth century.

Neither the men nor the message. We have no difficulty understanding his meaning when he mentions the message. Although there was sharp disagreement among the 11 concerning the doctrines of Calvinism and Arminianism, they all mutually agreed and preached the utter lostness of man, the substitutionary atonement of Christ, the new birth and the need and privilege of a holy life. It is not Ryle's comment on the message that is disturbing. It is his statement about the absence of the kind of men needed. Do we have men today as in that previous time? Do we have men with the determined intensity of Wesley, or the flaming, Spirit-anointed passion of Whitefield or even the calm, transparent purity and holiness of Fletcher? One biographer of Whitefield, Stuart C. Henry, said of him that he possessed that rare quality of the prophet in that he preached what he already practiced instead of trying to practice what he preached.

The question is a stubborn one that refuses to leave without an adequate answer. Do we have men and women who know the fullness of the Spirit of God as did these revival leaders of this past movement? This is the burden of this message. We can have men and women who experience God's principle of power if we can have men and women who will willingly pay the crucial price of sacrificial, dedicated, Christ-centered living. May we learn and learn well that "It is not by might nor by power but by my Spirit says the Lord of Hosts." This is God's principle of power.

Book Reviews

Tensions in Contemporary Theology, edited by Stanley N. Gundry and Alan F. Johnson, Chicago: Moody Press.

Tensions in Contemporary Theology, edited by Stanley Gundry and Alan F. Johnson, is an ambitious project. The editors have gathered an all-star set of evangelical writers (including Asbury Theological Seminary's own Dr. Harold B. Kuhn) for the purpose of summarizing and evaluating trends in contemporary theology. They are writing for the late-college or early seminary student. Given the wild and wooly nature of modern theology, this is no easy task.

The main strength of the book lies in the generally perceptive summaries and evaluations of the major movements in theology since World War II. Vernon Grounds' essay on Barth, Bultmann, Tillich, and Bonhoeffer offers in 60 pages a concise and useful analysis of these four men. David Wells, Harold Kuhn, and David Scaer do similarly competent essays on "Recent Roman Catholic Theology," "Secular Theology," and "Theology of Hope." If you do not know much about these theological movements then these articles will identify the major proponents of each, summarize their work, and evaluate each movement both positively and negatively.

The weaknesses of the book may result from the staggering diversity of modern theology. Bernard Ramm's article on theology from Schliermacher to Barth simply tries to cover too much ground. What he says is too vague and too general to help the beginner, and too simplistic to help anyone else. Stanley Obitts' article on linguistic analysis suffers from the complexity of the topic he is covering. I doubt seriously that the novice theological student with little or no background in linguistic analysis could follow this article at all. The essay drips with the specialized vocabulary of the subject, and uses an abundance of quotes from primary sources without helping the reader clear the fog caused by the specialized vocabulary. Geisler's article on process theology handles an equally difficult assignment with greater clarity, but this article might still be beyond a new seminarian. Somewhere before the end of one's seminary career, however, the evangelical student ought to be exposed to process thought; Geisler's article would be a fair place to begin.

Harold Brown's article on "The Conservative Option" is in one sense

very good, and in another sense a disappointment. As a restatement of evangelical theology and a critique of liberal theology, Brown's article is well written and well presented. However, I admit to some disappointment at finding such a traditionally stated evangelical polemic at the end of this book. The theologies presented in this book, however "sub-Christian" they may be, were still developed to meet some need or crisis in the world. This reviewer could have hoped that the final article of this excellent book would be an attempt by orthodoxy to speak concerning some of these problems. It is my firm conviction that the Biblical faith we espouse is a much more relevant answer to the needs of modern man than any of the modern liberal theologies reviewed in this book. One must appreciate a book such as this, which reviews and critiques the liberal "answers" to the world's needs. But, it would be well also to see a presentation of positive evangelical theological essays which address the needs of the modern world without surrendering Biblical revelation and the Gospel, as the liberal theologian has so often done.

Melvin E. Dieter
Associate Professor of Church History

The Gospel of John, An Expositional Commentary, by James Montgomery Boice, Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1976. 410 pp. $9.95.

This is Volume II of a projected five-volume exposition of the Gospel according to St. John. The author is pastor of the famous Tenth Presbyterian Church in Philadelphia and successor to Donald Gray Barnhouse on the coast-to-coast Bible Study Hour. This young author, pastor and radio preacher has degrees from Harvard, Princeton and Basel.

Three elements in the author's background reappear continually in the exposition: his theological training, his Reformed Theology, and his evangelistic concern. The commentary consists of a series of over 50 homilies based on portions of Scripture from John's Gospel, chapters 5-8. Nearly every message closes with an effective evangelistic appeal for a decision. The text bears out the comment in the preface that the author was influenced by Calvinistic doctrine and the sermons of Charles Spurgeon. The influence of Dallas Theological Seminary and the Scofield Reference Bible, which constitutes the text of the commentary, is reflected in the discussion at numerous points. Several es-

says are devoted to justifying the changing of the Sabbath from the seventh to the first day of the week for most Christians.

Students of this Gospel are frequently impressed with the element of determinism. Several passages speak as if salvation is all the work of God. Other passages in equal number stress man's responsibility in coming to God for grace.

Boice finds texts in John that support the five doctrines of classical Calvinism, including total depravity, unconditional election, limited atonement, irresistible grace, and preservation of the saints. The author is careful to point out that salvation is all of grace, and therefore, all of God. He observes that "God calls men to himself irresistibly by means of a miracle." He notes also that salvation is not for everyone but only for those whom God has chosen from the beginning to accept salvation and that God's election is irresistible. Without pausing to explain the theological problems here he also in the same discourse urges his readers to come to God because, "whosoever will may come" and that if we do not come we are held guilty. Boice holds that man "is guilty for his inability to believe" (p. 167). The logical absurdity of God making it impossible for one to believe and yet holding him guilty for not believing does not deter him from urgent pleas for repentance and faith.

The author shows a good acquaintance with history, especially theological history. Perhaps the greatest value of the volume is the clear call to repentance and faith. The reader may be thankful that the author's commitment to unconditional election and irresistible grace does not deter him from inconsistently calling all readers to repent and have faith and holding them responsible if they fail to do so.

The value of the text is enhanced by a subject index and a Scripture index at the close of the volume. Readers will find the book easy to read, challenging, and practical, and many will look forward to receiving from this author the concluding three volumes of the projected series.

George A. Turner
Professor of Biblical Literature

In The Beginning God . . . Answers to Questions on Genesis, by Clifford A. Wilson. Revised edition. Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1975. $2.50.

One of the most unusual features of this little book is its format.

The content was originally prepared as a series of questions and answers presented over radio station HCJB in Quito, Ecuador, and has been left in this format. The chapters are thus either seven or fourteen pages in length. The question and answer sequence provides some occasion for distraction and repetition, as some issues are considered from slightly different perspectives.

The intent of the book is the harmonizing of the first eleven chapters of Genesis with the discoveries of modern science. Dr. Clifford is an Australian archaeologist who readily recognizes the limits of his own authority and interprets quite flexibly outside his area of expertise. His perspective is literalistic wherever this seems permissible to account for the facts. But this basic commitment to literalism does not lead into as speculative and questionable an exegesis as this kind of literature is often susceptible to.

Dr. Clifford considers the usual questions: the meaning of "day," the problem of species, the problem of dating, evolution, creation myths, long lives, the flood and its universality, and the Tower of Babel. No striking new evidence, and no research of an original sort have gone into these studies. Various conservative perspectives are considered, and while Clifford is a literalist, he is open to changing position on many interpretations, should future evidence warrant it. One could wish that some of his consideration of the views of others were better documented. Also, by covering so many topics, the depth of argumentation is not great. An occasional logical non-sequitur also mars the work.

All in all, however, this is a book that a pastor can conscientiously place in the hands of a parishioner as an introduction to key issues in interpreting Genesis. While one may not agree at every point, there is a typical British (Australian in this case) breadth of perspective that is so frequently lacking in books of the same type in the United States. Clifford is much less defensive and more spiritually stimulating without being "preachy" like others. Thus, in general, this is a usable book.

The continued appearance of works of this type does raise one further question, however, that thinking Christians must eventually consider. The whole "science and religion" movement, as it is presently centered in California and Illinois, is encapsulated. Christians are addressing (and sometimes only bickering among) themselves. Debates center around differences in perspective among Christians, often with surprising acrimony. Fellow Christians of different beliefs are regarded as the most dangerous threats to the faith, which is patently fallacious in

the face of the Church's difficulty in confronting social issues and general Christian apathy.

An even more serious internal problem than this bickering is the failure to adequately keep in touch with developments in the sciences. Darwin is still the enemy, and Christians are ignorantly thinking themselves allied with recent attacks upon older forms of evolution from certain well-known scientists, completely missing the point that such scientists are merely seeking to improve the generally accepted evolutionary "paradigm" rather than to revolutionize it. Failure to keep in touch leads to failure to criticize "secular" scientific literature adequately. In sum, Christians still are not effectively breaking the barrier between Christian and scientific circles.

A final problem, for which this book is symbolic, is that attacks upon the geological column and the theory of evolution are piecemeal and are forms of special "case pleading." Too much Christian criticism is based upon the accumulation of exceptions to the evolutionary rules. The effort is to overwhelm the theory by the accumulation of tiny problems. Christians seem unable to discover any additional criteria of disproof acceptable to science itself. An effective attack will have to shake the foundations of scientific methodology, and find a Christian thinker to compete with Karl Popper, Thomas S. Kuhn, and other philosophers of science. Disproof will have to become more philosophical and comprehensive, and less devoted to minutia. Otherwise, Christians will continue to write good books, like this one, only for their own encouragement. If we settle for that alone, and abandon the effort to influence the antagonistic world, we abandon our Christian heritage of presenting comprehensive, Biblically-based philosophical foundations for understanding ourselves and our world.

Ivan L. Zabilka
Former ATS Registrar, Ph.D. Candidate

A History of Preaching, by Ralph G. Turnbull, Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1974. 586 pp.

The continuation of Edwin C. Dargan's monumental work on the history of preaching in two volumes, volume three is the product of years of research and active interest. This reviewer knows the author personally and is aware of the research investment. The Christian world can be grateful for a major reference work of this caliber.

Hundreds of preachers from many nations find their way into this

volume. Indexes and bibliographies add to the usefulness of the book.

History, secular and sacred, are frames of reference, and both literature and theology provide resource.

The scholar of Puritan thought will appreciate this work, as other works by Dr. Turnbull who is something of an authority in that field, too.

Exegesis and exposition, theology and life, the varieties of preaching – all are related to man and their peculiar talents. Actually, we have here a remarkable study in gifts. The novice will see preachers as preachers; but preachers themselves know very well that talents and creativities and contributions are as different as faces.

Denominational perspectives reveal themselves too, as do the various lifestyles, theological and homiletical, from the pietist to the modernist.

Altogether, here is a reference tool no library can be without, and which most ministers will want to keep as a ready information resource.

Donald E. Demaray
Professor of Preaching

The Horizontal Line Synopsis of the Gospels, by Reuben J. Swanson, Dillsboro, NC: Western North Carolina Press, 1975. 597 pp. $23.95.

In this remarkable volume, the author, the Professor of Philosophy and Religion at Western Carolina University, undertakes to facilitate the task of students of the New Testament. The result is a unique harmony of the four Gospels. Most harmonies arrange the text of the Gospels in parallel columns. The disadvantage of this arrangement is that the natural order is disturbed, "since no gospel is followed consecutively in its natural sequence without interruption. Furthermore, gospel materials in current Synopses are juxtaposed only approximately, for frequently the organization of materials varies within the pericopes themselves." Thus, the author describes the situation for which this volume seeks a remedy.

The result is a synopsis which uses horizontal rather than vertical lines. There are four parts, each of which is a synopsis in itself. In the first synopsis, Matthew is the "lead Gospel" and its text is on the top line with Mark, Luke and John in matching parallel lines below. In the second, Mark is the lead Gospel with Matthew, Luke and John below. The third section is headed by Luke with Matthew, Mark and John below; the fourth is headed by John.

The words which match are underscored. Exact parallels are so arranged that they are aligned vertically to facilitate comparison. Secondary comparisons are printed in light italic. This format also permits parallels outside of the four Gospels, such as the inclusion of Paul's words about the Eucharist. This makes it possible "for the first time to see all the similarities and differences in synoptic form."

This is a very painstaking work and is expertly accomplished. It presents the student of the Gospels with an invaluable study tool that should greatly simplify the task of comparing one account with each of the others. Available also is the same synopsis in Greek. Both author and publisher are to be commended for the vision, the courage and the patience which produced this result. It should find a warm welcome and extensive use by students of the New Testament.

George Allen Turner
Professor of Biblical Literature

William Barclay: A Spiritual Autobiography, Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1975. 122 pp.

This work is at once delightful and provocative. The sources of delight are many: high interest, an oral style, and some sense of intimate acquaintance with perhaps the best known popular Bible commentator of our time. Moreover, advancing one's own knowledge of the man, his method and message, along with fresh facts about any number of subjects, only add to the dimension of joy in the reading of this little autobiography.

The provocative side of the book is in its challenge to orthodoxy. William Barclay refuses to be pressed into anyone's mold. He is Barclay and never lets his readers forget that. If he disagrees with parts of the Apostles' Creed (and he does), he lets you know. If he refuses to embrace the orthodox doctrine of the omnipotence of God (and he does – pp. 112-115) he says so.

This leads one to say Barclay is not a traditional evangelical. He calls himself a "liberal evangelical." He believes his sins are forgiven; he loves Jesus Christ and follows Him; he identifies with the Church and says the Apostles' Creed. But he is humanistic in much of what he believes personally. This reviewer appreciates the spirit in which Dr. Barclay makes his liberal confessions, but Christians at once evangelical and orthodox will take issue with him, and rightly so.

On the positive side, it is refreshing to see a man of his influence herald the family so enthusiastically! In more than one place he speaks with loving concern about the family, and his lovely words of gratitude to his wife, Kate (pp. 17-18) are as touching as anything he says in the book.

One also appreciates his beautiful humility ("I am a second rate mind"), his discipline (he never wrote a sermon after Thursday), his passion to speak and write so ordinary people can understand him, and the flowing beauty of his prose.

Donald E. Demaray
Professor of Preaching

Book Briefs

by Donald E. Demaray

The Essence of Spiritual Religion, by D. Elton Trueblood, New York, Evanston, San Francisco, London: Harper & Row Publishers, 1975. 156 pp.

The concerned pastor will read Trueblood with profit – always. Don't miss this little volume, now available in a low cost paperback edition.

The chapter on worship will provide a new dimension in terms of both thought and practice. The material on sin and salvation (chapter VI) cannot fail to stimulate.

Of help not only to the minister, this would not be a bad little volume to place in the hands of thoughtful parishioners.

Preludes to Prayer, compiled by Louis Cassels, Nashville, New York: Abingdon Press, 1974. 189 pp.

No minister should go another week without *Preludes to Prayer* done by this famous religious journalist. Cassels reads widely and well, and has put together an anthology of almost incomparable quality.

Put this in the hands of your laymen, too.

Expository Preaching: Plans and Methods, by F. B. Meyer, Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1974. 127 pp. $1.95.

Meyer's work, reprinted as part of *The Notable Books on Preaching* series, deserves a place in the preacher's library. The contemporary minister of the Gospel, however, will find the older expression of principles and their application good as background but not always translatable for man in the 70's.

Recommended: the whole of *The Notable Books on Preaching* series published by Baker Book House of Grand Rapids, Michigan.

When Life Tumbles In, by Batsell Barrett Baxter, Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1974. 136 pp. $3.95.

This is a good little book of sermons on crucial issues – alcoholism, loneliness, the golden years, etc. Pastors will find stimulation and guidance in working out their own sermons on these contemporary and ever-relevant concerns.

Holiness, by Earnest Larsen, New York: Paulist Press, 1975. 106 pp.

Here is a work on holiness that pastors will read with great profit. Father Larsen speaks right out of a busy parish where he wrestles with life and death issues – alcoholics, marriages on the verge of collapse, addicts, neurotics, and all the rest of it. Thus, what he says has a cogency not always found in works on the subject. He perceives the chief characteristic of holiness as growth.

The Power of Prayer in Business and the Professions, by G. Ernest Thomas, Nashville: Tidings, 1975. 67 pp.

Pastors will do well to purchase a small supply of this little paperback to place in the hands of potential prayer group leaders in industry, business, and the professions. Dr. Thomas in plain and clear language shows the great benefits of corporate devotionals in factory and office, and it is difficult to see how anyone could read this book without a sense of urgency.

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In the Journals section, back issues of The Asbury Journal will be digitized and so made available to a global audience. At the same time, we are excited to be working with several faculty members on developing professional, peer-reviewed, online journals that would be made freely available.

Much of this endeavor is made possible by the recent gift of the Kabis III scanner, one of the best available. The scanner can produce more than 2,900 pages an hour and features a special book cradle that is specifically designed to protect rare and fragile materials. The materials it produces will be available in ebook format, easy to download and search.

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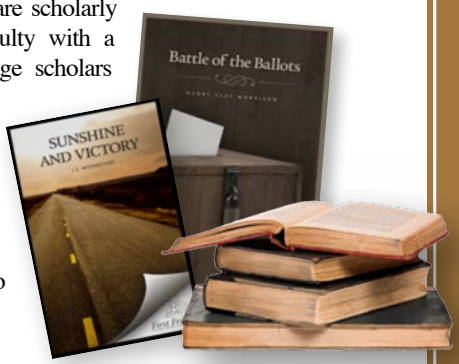

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